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ABSTRACT

Though financial cutbacks have necessitated drastic reductions in community college services in Washington and threaten accepted beliefs about missions, such as the provision of universal educational opportunity, it is important that trustees recognize that educational trends need not necessarily become educational realities. While studies, such as that conducted by the Trustees Association of Community Colleges, have established priorities for programmatic and operational goals for the colleges as vocational education, general education, remedial preparation, an open college climate, effective management, and accountability, these should be viewed as guidelines, rather than mandates. Trustees should accept these prescriptions as a framework while attempting to ensure that all who wish to take advantage of higher education and who can benefit from it should be given the opportunity and encouragement to develop their talents. Additionally, trustees must carefully examine the purpose of their institutions and their courses and develop means of evaluating them in order to ensure that scarce resources are being used effectively. Specifically, they should determine how essential a program is, and its quality, demand, location, and cost. Finally, they should acknowledge their own role in creating a future for community colleges that is more than simply a logical outcome of existing trends. (HB)

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THE LEGISLATURE DOESN'T HAVE A GLASS EYE

By: John N. Terrey

A Speech Delivered to the Trustees Association of Community Colleges in Pasco, Washington, May 7, 1982.

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THE LEGISLATURE DOESN'T HAVE A GLASS EYE
by John N. Terrey

(A Speech Delivered to the Trustees Association of Community Colleges
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Thank you, Mary.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to be with you and to share in your program.

Thank you also for serving as a trustee. Your service is essential. Community is our middle name. Our colleges belong to their communities and must serve those communities. You are that vital link between the community college and the community it serves, between our purpose and our programs, between our programs and our students. To you has been entrusted the community colleges of this state. Your task is to see to it that the college is structured in a manner to deliver our services as efficiently and effectively as possible to all those who need them and can benefit from them. These are not easy times. This decade is not going to be an easy one. We will need the best you have to give if we are to deliver quality services under stringent financial conditions.

Before proceeding, I want to explain the intriguing title of this speech. Once upon a time, there was a young faculty member who had an idea which required some modest funding. He went to his dean and explained briefly his proposal. Without any reflection or any hesitation, the dean said, "No." Crushed by the curt reply, the faculty member retreated to his office to lick his wounds and, upon reflection, concluded that the dean did not really understand what the proposal was, and that if he really understood, he would have approved it. He decided to approach the dean again, but this time with an outline of the proposal in writing. The response was exactly the same from the dean and the reaction was exactly the same from the faculty member, who said, "He didn't really understand. If he understood, he would have funded the proposal. Therefore, I will write out a summary of the proposal." Which he did. And again, he met with the dean and again, unfortunately, the response was a quick and definitive "No!"

The response heightened the determination of the young faculty member. This time he went back to his office and he wrote out the proposal in full, complete with a working bibliography, 373 footnotes, 12 resumes, and 17 letters of endorsement. Again he returned to the dean, who looked at the mountain of material and observed to the faculty member, "You really want this proposal, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," replied the faculty member.

"Okay, I'll tell you what I will do. Unknown to most people is the fact that I have a glass eye. If you can tell me which of my eyes is the glass eye, I will fund your proposal."

Without a moment of hesitation, the faculty member pointed to the right eye and said, "That's the glass eye."

"You're right! I'm amazed. How did you guess so quickly?"

"Oh, that's easy," said the faculty member. "In that eye I see compassion, understanding, sensitivity, intelligence."

Well, the legislature does not have a glass eye and our proposal was not funded. Let me say, however, that this state is in a dire financial condition. Our agencies--and we are no exception--are suffering. While the consequences are devastating to the colleges and, more importantly, to the people we are not able to serve, without financial recovery there will be no relief. Regardless of which political party has control of the legislature next January, there will be no easy solution. The revenue is not there.

Since this biennium began only ten months ago, our austere budget has been cut a total of ten percent through legislative action and gubernatorial orders. As a consequence, the "open door" has been closed. There are 44,317 fewer people--warm-blooded, breathing, aspiring individuals--than were in the system one year ago.

There are 576 fewer faculty positions.

There are 3,980 fewer class sections.

These reductions are the direct consequence of budget reductions. We simply do not have the financial resources to offer the classes, to hire the faculty, to serve the students.

The demand for our services is there; it cannot be met. The system has changed dramatically in one year. In the future, 1981-82 will be identified by our historians as a great discontinuity. Our purpose has been compromised. But--while we must adjust in the short run--we must not lose sight of our purpose.

Fifteen years ago--in 1967--I believed in the open door philosophy. I believed in the need for a comprehensive curriculum. But--like you--I have had to re-evaluate my position. This is a time for careful and thoughtful and agonizing reappraisal.

One of the significant books in community colleges is entitled Financing Community Colleges: An Economic Perspective by David Breneman and Susan Nelson--two fellows at the Brookings Institution. They point out " . . . the growing tension between the evolving, educational missions embraced by the colleges and the financial policies endorsed by state officials." That is reality--reality which we must accept. But, while we must accept reality, we must also continue to sustain our purpose. Our purpose is the trust you hold as trustees.

While we may be poor in resources, we must be rich in will. Politics is history in the making. Do not capitulate to the temporal wails of fleeting political whims. If you are to be evaluated--and you will be--play today for a judgment in history. While I may be disappointed by the consequences of legislative action for the community colleges, I am not disappointed in the legislative process. I still remember the opening remarks of General Douglas MacArthur's address to the joint session of the Congress:

> I stand here on this rostrum with a sense of deep humility and great pride. Humility in the wake of those great American architects of our history who have stood here before me and pride in the reflection that this home of legislative debate represents the purest form of human liberty yet devised.

On the plane I read a beautiful article by the late Rene Dubos, the Pulitzer Price winning biologist who died on February 20, 1982, at the age of 81. The article was his last and significantly it was entitled "A Celebration of Life." Listen to Dr. Dubos from his hospital bed:

> "Human beings inevitably alter the course of events and make a mockery of any attempt to predict the future from an extrapolation of existing trends. In human affairs, the logical future, determined by past and present conditions, is less important than the willed future, which is largely brought about by deliberate choices--made by the human free will."

Trend is not destiny. Human will--believed and acted upon--is will. Regardless of the conditions of the present, sustain hope for people by enlarging their opportunity. For countless thousands of our citizens, the community colleges are their hope for personal development. To you goes the responsibility to preserve through these difficult times the opportunity our colleges represent for those thousands of people. We as community colleges were created to provide universal educational opportunity. Therefore, I have re-examined my beliefs in the light of current trends and current realities. As a result, I believe in the value of the open door philosophy and the essentialness of a comprehensive curriculum beyond that open door. I believe today just as strongly as I did 15 years ago.

I want to leave these lofty thoughts for a few moments to respond to two issues I have been asked to talk about.

In October of last year we published the results of an Educational Goals Study. This study was made possible in part by the financial support of TACC. I want to acknowledge that support and to express my appreciation to TACC publicly.

The instrument used in the survey was one developed by the Educational Testing Service entitled "The Community College Goals Inventory." Twenty goal areas were used. According to the survey, the six top priorities were:

PROGRAMMATIC:

1. Vocational/Technical Education - Specific occupational programs (such as accounting), programs geared to emerging career fields, updating present job skills, and retraining for new jobs.

2. General Education - Acquisition of general knowledge, basic competencies, and life skills; preparation for advanced work.

3. Developmental/Remedial Preparation - Assessing needs, providing developmental programs for different learning rates, evaluating programs and assuring student competency achievement.

OPERATIONAL:

4. College Community: A climate of open, amicable, and trusting relationships among faculty, students, and administrators.

5. Effective Management - Appropriate involvement in decision making; systematic planning, and systematic evaluation of all programs.

6. Accountability - Using cost criteria in determining programs; concern for efficiency; and accountability to funding sources for program effectiveness.

There appears to be general acceptance of our emphasis on two programmatic areas: (1) Vocational/Technical Education, and (2) General Education.

In four areas the respondents felt that a higher importance should be given than is being given currently. One of these is programmatic--Developmental/Remedial Preparation. All three of the operational priorities were in need of strengthening: (1) College Community, (2) Effective Management, (3) Accountability.

A brief summary of the survey has been distributed to the tables.

With surveys let me say that I think we should have the intelligence to use them, but the wisdom not to abuse them. They are guides, not dictation. Do not let them make your decisions. Note the five items under "Goal Areas That Should Be Of Lower Importance Than They Are."

1. Accessibility
2. Freedom
3. Student Services
4. Counseling and Advising
5. Lifelong Learning

I disagree strongly with the respondents on four of those, but I benefit from knowing what the general perceptions of the respondents are.

The second issue I was asked to comment on relates to transfer agreements. I regret to say that we are having difficulty with the agreements, especially with the University of Washington. But--in all fairness--I need to point out that there are some community colleges who are not living up to their agreements.

Next fall will be critical. At that time we will renegotiate our transfer agreement with the University of Washington.

Our goal is clear. We want to develop transfer programs that are sufficiently strong so that our students with an AA degree will be accepted without question or penalty with junior standing. Beyond these general remarks the issue is best handled through negotiations. You will be kept informed.

Now I want to return to you as trustees and to the frustrating times in which we live. On this, our 15th anniversary, we can look back with pride in our accomplishments. Make no mistake about it. You have played a role in the unfolding of one of the greatest success stories in the long anthology of higher education. But that is the past. The present is desperate. The future is uncertain. We cannot influence the past, but we can learn from it. If we concentrate only in the present, we will be active participants in crisis management. Concentrate on the future. That is the opportunity. Act now in such a way as to invent a future--a future true to the ideals of the past but not limited in vision to the present. "Be true to thine own self."

President David Kennedy of Stanford University recently said:

chorus of voices that lay claim to the present.

"The legal entity of a university entails the vision of the university as the community of the present and of all possible futures.

"The guardians of this vision of the institution have a responsibility not only for what it is, but for what it is to become--the unappointed faculty, the unmade experiment, the unborn student."

We need to approach the future with ideas in our heads and ideals in our hearts. We need a warm and hopeful heart as a guide for a tough and analytical head.

Our primary reason for existence as community colleges is to extend educational opportunities--principally for those who would never have the opportunity without the presence of the community college. The benefits in economic, social, and moral terms are many. Likewise, the consequences of failure are many. But failure is unacceptable.

I would cite three propositions (on moral grounds) to make the case for the extension of educational opportunity. I do this with the words of Martin Luther in my mind.

"In my judgment there is no other outward offense that in the sight of God so heavily burdens the world and deserves such heavy chastisement, as to neglect to educate children."

Today and tomorrow children will come to us in all ages to be educated and to be re-educated.

The three propositions are:

1. Substantial education is conducive and essential to the fulfillment of people as whole human beings.

2. The percentage of the population that could achieve personal growth through higher education probably exceeds greatly the percentage now benefitting from it. Those unserved represent the greatest tragic waste there is--the waste of human potential.

3. Given the first two propositions it follows that each person should have the opportunity, the encouragement, the obligation to develop fully his or her unique personal powers insofar as that can be done through education.

These three propositions reach one crescendo: It is immoral to suppress people's potential by keeping them ignorant when we have the skills and the means to assist them to become more than they are.

This is the very point the poet Thomas Gray had in mind when he wrote his famous "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." You recall that Gray at the end of the day stood in the simple churchyard and surveyed the graves which represented lost opportunity:

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

* * * * *

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes.

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cooling sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Thomas Carlyle might well have had this thought in mind when he wrote:

> "That there should be one man die ignorant who had the capacity to learn, this I call a tragedy. To impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think: This one would imagine, was the first function a government had to set about discharging."

John Gardner has wisely written:

> "Quite aside from the moral argument for opportunity, no modern nation can afford to lose the human talent that is so often buried under layers of economic and class discriminations. Modern societies run on talent, yet it's doubtful that any society has ever used more than a fraction of the talent available to it. The rest is blocked by poverty, ignorance, class barriers, prejudice, physical and mental ill health, and so on. The society must address itself to the removal of all obstacles to growth and fulfillment, whether they stem from imperfections in the society, in the educational system, or in the individual."

Ideals are fragile. They often survive at the whims of politicians whose visions of the future are limited to the next election. Ideals must be made practical and put to work in a world of realism. Peter Drucker--Mr. Management--has raised two primary questions which should be asked every day by trustees of themselves and of the management they have selected to operate the colleges.

What <u>is</u> our business?

What <u>ought</u> our business to be?

The disparity between what <u>is</u> and what <u>ought to be</u> is the problem we face.

In today's financially troubled world we are urged to be efficient--that is, to utilize our resources prudently. This is important, but it is incomplete--especially for a service institution--and we are service institutions. We must use our resources wisely to achieve the results which justify our existence. As important as efficiency might be, our real target must always be effectiveness. How well are we doing what we are supposed to be doing?

Needless to say, we cannot measure our effectiveness unless we know what we seek to achieve. Achievement is never possible except against specific, limited, clearly defined targets. Only if targets are defined can resources be allocated to their attainment, priorities and deadlines set, and somebody be held accountable for results. This is the place that trustees can and should play their most important role. Trustees are most effective when they are asking questions, particularly the tough questions.

--What is our purpose as an institution?

--What is our purpose in offering developmental education courses? In offering any course?

--Are we achieving those purposes? What are the results?

Before any of the resources which trustees husband are released, specific questions need to be answered.

--How does this purpose fit our role and mission?

--What is to be achieved, by whom, when?

Then compare the results against the plan. Did it work? If not, why not?

The purpose of developmental education is to assist the student to overcome those impediments to effective learning. This is a noble purpose. But what is the design--the plan--to implement the purpose? How will achievement be measured? What would happen if the programs were not offered? What would happen in terms of effectiveness if the student/faculty ratio were cut in half? These questions and more must be asked before the resources are released. Then the results need to be evaluated.

At Vanderbilt University, seven criteria were developed in order to assess the effectiveness of their academic programs. Let me paraphrase:

1. How essential is the program to the college?

   --Is it required, not required? Why?
   --Is it essential to the purpose of the college? How?
   --Are there measures of effectiveness? (Does the program actually do what it purports to do for students?)

2. What is the quality of the program? (excellent, strong, adequate, weak)

   --What are the measures of quality?

3. What is the need for the program? (high, medium, low) (This is largely a judgment call.)

4. What is the demand for the program? (high, medium, low)

   --What is the student demand for the program?
   --What is the placement rate in the job market?

5. Should the program be located here?

   --What are the geographical advantages/disadvantages?
   --What are the demographic, cultural, social needs?

6. What are the cost/revenue relationships? (favorable, unfavorable)

   --What are the data on student-faculty ratios, costs per credit hour, sources of funds.

   In brief, is the program a financial asset or a financial liability? (It may be a liability but still essential for other compelling reasons.)

7. What are the cost implications of maintaining or changing the program role?

   --If the program is effective, could it still be effective at a lower cost?
   --If the program is not effective, what would be the cost requirements for making it effective?

I hasten to add that no program should be judged against a single criterion--a composite picture is needed by measuring the program against all criteria. Finally, the process is only a process. At best it is a help to trustees in making a judgment; it is not a substitute for judgment.

In conclusion I want to return to my earlier reference to Rene Dubos who so eloquently reminded us that "in human affairs, the willed future always prevails over the logical future." Let me assure you that it will not be easy to survive to say nothing of flourishing. But flourish we will.

We must depend upon our own inner strengths to will our future. Like the legislature, we do not have a glass eye to reflect our compassion and intelligence.

For reasons I do not fully understand, I am taken back many years to the classroom when I tried to explain poetry. I would state that the opposite of prose was verse, that poetry can be present in either prose or verse--or it can be absent from both.

"Thirty days hath September" is good verse, even useful, but it is devoid of any poetry. Poetry is that little perturbation in the blood. It can be present even in prose. Here is an example.

It is June 4, 1940. Dunkirk has fallen. The British Expeditionary Force has been destroyed. Logic dictates that Hitler will cross the English Channel as the first conqueror of England since the Norman Conquest of 1066. Winston Churchill, the old lion, roared his defiance to the House of Commons with these concluding poetic words:

> "We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets and on the hills. We shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for the moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old.

That is willing a future.

Thank you.

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